

MINUTES

Braam Oversight Panel
Outlook Conference Room, OB2, Capital Campus
Olympia, WA
July 25, 2006

Panel Members: John Landsverk (Chair), Jeanine Long, Jan McCarthy, Jess McDonald, Dorothy Roberts

Plaintiffs' Attorneys: William Grimm, Casey Trupin, Tim Ferris, Bryn Martyna

Assistant Attorney General: Steve Hassett

Others: Cheryl Stephani, Ross Dawson, Deborah Purce, Paula Duranceau, John Morse, Laurie Lippold, Sarah Cherin, Wanda Fleisher, Cery Coverts, Deborah Reed, Vickie Stock, Theron Dixon, Lyn Craik, Thomas Rembiers, Scott Swaim, Dave Wood, Stella Faria, Kiki Keizer, Sydney Forrester, Steve Norsen, Janet Skreen, Steve Wickmark, Steve Baxter, Maureen MarcenkoJohn Tarnai, Linda Mason Wilgis, Jim Theofelis

Note: The minutes are a general summary of discussion and do not attempt to document every comment.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10pm.

Welcome and Introductions

John Landsverk thanked Roxanne Lieb for her excellent work as the Panel's Executive Coordinator. Roxanne is transitioning back to her role as Director of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. He announced that Carrie Whitaker had been hired to serve as the Panel's Executive Coordinator.

Settlement Activities

John Landsverk updated the group on key activities since the last meeting of the Panel on March 24, 2006. Key activities and progress include (all major documents mentioned below are available on the Braam Panel website):

- Monitoring Report- The Panel issued its first monitoring report on March 28, 2006. This report reviewed Children's Administration's progress through December 31, 2005 with respect to the Action Steps outlined in the Implementation Plan (derived from Kids Come First II). In this report, the Panel determined whether each Action Step was complete through the performance period, incomplete, or not yet due. Many action steps were determined to be incomplete.
- Compliance Plan- As outlined in the Settlement Agreement, the Children's Administration submitted a compliance plan detailing how it would achieve compliance with the Action Steps determined to be incomplete by the Panel in its first monitoring report. Children's Administration submitted a Compliance Plan in

May 2006, and plaintiffs submitted comments. The Panel issued a decision on June 22, 2006, in which it determined that the Compliance Plan was unacceptable. Children's Administration submitted a revised plan on July 14, 2006. Because the process of submissions and comments by CA and the plaintiffs is somewhat cumbersome, the Panel has begun to take a more active role in technical assistance in order to move the process forward. The Panel will issue a decision on CA's revised compliance plan before the next public meeting in September 2006.

- Measurement activities- Another major activity over the past several months has been the Panel's close work with CA to develop baseline data. Baseline data will come from 3 sources: (1) administrative database; (2) chart review; (3) foster parent survey. Work with the administrative data is furthest along, and the Panel continues to work with CA in all of these areas. The baseline data will form the foundation of the Panel's next monitoring report, which will be published before the next public meeting September 2006.
- Professional standards- The Panel continues to work on developing professional standards, which under the Settlement Agreement can be used during enforcement proceedings. CA and plaintiffs provided input regarding the standards, and the Panel will release a draft to the parties within the next several weeks.

Monitoring Data

Administrative Database

John Landsverk noted that the Panel had been working with CA, including Lee Doran, who leads CA's data unit. He indicated that Lee had begun producing reports by region, by cohort, and by other subgroups. John noted that data are not currently available for some outcomes, and that the Panel and CA were discussing options for how to develop data sources. CA has also been working with the Mental Health Division and other agencies to obtain data. John expressed confidence that, despite some limitations, the next monitoring report would include credible and understandable reports.

Foster Parent Survey

Ross Dawson, CA, noted that the implementation plan required CA to contract with Washington State University (WSU) to conduct a foster parent survey. He stated that CA would be working to submit a final survey design to the Panel in December 2006, and that survey results would become available in the first half of 2007.

John Tarnai, WSU, provided an overview of the survey process and questions. He stated that they had been working to consider issues including sampling, number of completed interviews needed, type of survey, and specific questions to be posed to foster parents. He indicated that the plan is to conduct phone surveys on a confidential basis, and to send a letter to foster parents in advance to encourage response. Interviewers would be largely WSU students. He noted that 400 completed interviews would be needed in each of the six regions in order to assure a sufficient level of confidence in the results. The interview instrument includes questions related to household composition, adequacy of

training, support from DSHS, demographics, relationships with social workers and licensors, and communication.

Panel members and audience members discussed the following issues related to the foster parent survey:

- Advisory group- It was agreed that an advisory group would be formed to guide the development of the survey. The advisory group should include at least half foster parents, and CA will work with Foster Parents of Washington State (FPAWS) to identify participants. Carrie Whitaker will represent the Panel on this group.
- Unlicensed caregivers- Based on public discussion, the Panel agreed that unlicensed caregivers should be surveyed. Separate survey questions may need to be developed. The Panel may consider altering some of the action steps in the Implementation Plan related to foster parent training and information to include unlicensed caregivers.
- Confidentiality- The Panel felt strongly that interviewers should very clearly notify respondents that results are confidential and the CA would not have access to information about who had responded to the survey. Both the introductory statements to be used by interviewers and the letters sent to foster parents in advance of the survey need to be clear that this process is independent of CA and anonymous from their perspective.
- Former foster parents- Public comment indicated that it is important to survey former foster parents in order to better understand their concerns and their reasons for leaving. The Panel agreed that some former foster parents should be surveyed, and suggested that the population to be surveyed should include all foster parents who had a child in placement sometime during the past year, which would include many foster parents no longer serving children in their homes.

CA commented that they are seeking additional guidance on the scope of the survey, and the Panel indicated that this should be determined with the advisory group. Cheryl Stephani indicated that CA was extremely interested in the results of the survey, and expressed concern that changes (e.g. adding unlicensed caregivers) would slow down the timeline of the process.

Plaintiffs asked what the timeline would be for them to provide comments. Panel members encouraged them to work with Panel staff and CA and to provide feedback by late August.

Chart Review

Maureen Marcenko, University of Washington School of Social Work, updated the group on the status of the chart review. The chart review will examine 7 outcome items for which data cannot be obtained from the administrative database or the foster parent survey. The field review process will involve CA case review staff, university reviewers, and stakeholders.

Discussion focused on challenges in gathering data on whether the needs of the child were matched with the capacities of the home at the time of placement. Maureen noted

that CA often had very little information at the time of placement, and that background that is available does not appear to be documented in a standard way in the case record or in CAMIS. Cheryl noted that just because the information is not clearly documented does not mean that placement desk staff does not consider the needs of the child, but she agreed that there needed to be evidence in the chart in order for this to be counted in the chart review. Maureen proposed that the approach to this indicator look at all children whose placement reason related to behavioral problems, as well as a random sample of all other placements, which would be examined for any evidence that their needs were considered at the time of placement. Dorothy Roberts asked for further information on how the chart reviewers would define "needs of children" and "matching." Maureen indicated that she was working on an operational definition of need that included medical needs, behavioral needs, connection with siblings, and connections with schools and communities. Steve Baxter commented that, given that CA often does not have a lot of information at the time of placement, the question of how foster parents are supported once they accept a child is at least as important as issues related to matching.

Maureen indicated that December 2006 is the target for delivery of baseline data to the Panel.

Evidence-Based Programs for Children in Child Welfare

Cheryl Stephani presented an overview of CA's work to develop and implement evidence-based programs for children across the state. Programs discussed included: multidisciplinary treatment foster care, parent-child interaction therapy, functional family therapy, the incredible years, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, multisystemic therapy, and Project Safe Care. John Landsverk commended CA for its work to implement a broad range of high quality programs.

An audience member expressed appreciation for CA's efforts in this area, but asked how CA was working to improve the motivation of individual caseworkers to provide innovative services. Cheryl responded that CA was in the process of developing and implementing a model and framework to elevate practice across the state.

Other Discussion

Jim Theofelis stated that he had understood that the Panel would be implementing a survey of foster youth/ alumni. Several audience members noted that youth have compelling stories to tell, and have the potential to be an important source of information. Bill Grimm asked whether the Panel would entertain a proposed new action step from the community. Jess McDonald expressed concern, noting that it would be useful to get other action steps, including the foster parent survey, underway before adding new ones. Tim Ferris stated that he felt that surveying youth about their experience in foster care was critically important. Plaintiffs and community members indicated that they were likely to develop a proposal for a foster youth survey for the Panel's consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.